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*Secretary Muskie*

# U.S. Nuclear Strategy

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*Following is a statement by Secretary of State Edmund S. Muskie before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, September 16, 1980.*

I am pleased to have this opportunity to join Secretary of Defense Harold Brown to discuss our nuclear targeting strategy with you. When I was a member of this committee, I strongly believed we had a responsibility to concern ourselves with issues of strategic nuclear policy. Over the years, I probed a series of Administration officials and outside experts on how changes in our nuclear doctrine, forces, and strategy affected our security and international stability. I did not leave those concerns behind when I became Secretary of State. Indeed, it is a central part of my responsibilities to insure that foreign policy considerations—in the broadest sense—are taken into account in decisions about defense programs and doctrine.

As Secretary of State, I am particularly concerned with the ways in which our strategic doctrine bears on our overall foreign policy toward our allies and adversaries. To support our basic foreign policy and national security objectives, our nuclear strategy should satisfy the following conditions.

- It should insure that potential adversaries are fully convinced of our determination to resist nuclear aggression on any scale, at all times, and in all circumstances.

- It should avoid stimulating a cycle of superpower misperception and miscalculation that could undermine strategic stability.

- It should be fully consistent with our arms control objectives, so that we preserve the opportunities to strengthen security and stability by means of equitable and verifiable arms control agreements.

- It should encourage and justify the willingness of our friends and allies to link their security with our own.

I believe the countervailing strategy meets these tests.

The countervailing strategy underscores and unmistakably communicates to the Soviets two fundamental truths. First, they could derive no conceivable benefit from initiating the use of nuclear weapons, no matter how limited or extensive the attack and no matter at what stage in a conflict they might be launched. Second, nuclear conflict cannot be an instrument for achieving national policy goals, either for us or the Soviet Union; there surely will be no victor in a nuclear war.

Our strategy and our capability to inflict massive destruction in retaliation provide the bases for convincing the Soviets of both propositions. The countervailing strategy builds on and complements this traditional doctrine. It enhances our ability to launch selective as well as massive retaliatory attacks and to cover the full range of targets the Soviets

value. It makes clear our capacity to respond to any Soviet nuclear attack—whatever its magnitude and form—at an appropriate scale, intensity, and focus. We have moved in this direction in order to insure that the Soviets—whatever their notions about nuclear war or the utility of nuclear weapons—do not mistakenly conclude they could achieve some advantage by initiating the use of nuclear weapons or by launching limited strikes.

As such, the countervailing strategy is not a radical departure from previous policy. It is rather the result of a gradual evolution of our doctrine over a period of years in response to changing conditions and new knowledge. The credible capacity to devastate the Soviet Union under any circumstances remains its cornerstone. Thus, we will continue to include the full spectrum of political and military, as well as urban-industrial, targets in our planning. Presidential Determination 59 does not signify a shift to a warfighting strategy nor to a first-strike doctrine. It does underscore—and I believe strengthens—the credibility of our capability to retaliate against any nuclear attack under any circumstances, be it a massive strike against the United States or a more limited one against our forces or our allies.

The public reaction of the Soviets is what one would expect. They claim the countervailing strategy is a warfighting strategy and a U.S. effort to achieve a first-strike capability that would undermine strategic stability. They also charge that Presidential Determination 59 is the real explanation for NATO's decision on theater nuclear forces (TNF) modernization and reflects a U.S. intent to confine any nuclear war to Europe while the United States remains immune from attack. These claims are neither surprising nor true.

But we should expect the Soviets to try to use Presidential Determination 59 to split us from our allies and deprive us of European support for our post-Afghanistan efforts. We can expect the Soviets to focus their energies on undermining the NATO consensus in favor of TNF modernization.

These Soviet accusations, in fact, ring hollow in view of their own doctrine, their attention to nuclear warfighting, and the size and character of their strategic nuclear forces. Moreover, they have never been particularly comfortable with what they regard as our "city-killing" philosophy of nuclear deterrence. I do not

believe they genuinely regard this evolution in our nuclear strategy as a move to a first-strike, warfighting doctrine. The central purpose of our deterrence policy is to underscore the consequences for the Soviets if they should ever initiate the use of nuclear weapons.

We want to make sure the Soviets get that message. But we also want to insure that they get the message right. We need to remain fully alert to the risks of misperception and miscalculation, to the danger that the Soviets may see provocation where we intend none. I do not want anyone to wrongly conclude that we suddenly have become confident about our ability to orchestrate nuclear exchanges and control escalation or that we have become complacent about the use of nuclear weapons.

We will continue to emphasize to the Soviets that our intentions are peaceful and that we pose no threat to their legitimate security interests. At the same time, we will continue to insist that they respect the interests and rights of others and remind them of the consequences if they resort to nuclear weapons.

In this connection, I need hardly add that we do not regard the countervailing strategy as in any way a substitute for arms control or as a symptom of disenchantment with the arms control process. On the contrary, the countervailing strategy is fully consistent with the SALT II Treaty and our longer term arms control objectives. Nothing in the countervailing strategy changes or challenges our belief that nuclear arms control can make a significant contribution to our security and to international stability. Nothing in the evolution of our nuclear doctrine has led us to reassess the benefits of equitable and verifiable arms control agreements with our chief adversary. In particular, I continue to believe strongly that SALT II would make a crucial contribution to our national security. We will ask the Senate to act on ratification at the earliest feasible time.

The allies share our concern about the need to deter the full range of Soviet nuclear threats as well as our continued commitment to arms control and to the maintenance of strategic stability. By reinforcing allied confidence in the credibility of our nuclear guarantee, the countervailing strategy will strengthen alliance cohesion and solidarity as well as

directly reduce the likelihood of conflict. The countervailing strategy reflects and supports the NATO strategy of flexible response by underscoring the availability of a full spectrum of nuclear responses.

We have discussed the evolution of our nuclear strategy and its relationship to flexible response in the normal course of consultations with our allies. The detailed discussion of the countervailing strategy in Secretary Brown's annual report to the Congress last January provided an excellent basis for our dialogue this year. Secretary Brown also gave an extensive briefing to the NATO Nuclear Planning Group this past June.

In the course of these consultations and in the aftermath of press reports about Presidential Determination 59, the allies have indicated they understand the countervailing strategy and appreciate the ways in which it strengthens the U.S. strategic linkage to their security. I do not want to leave the impression that we take their support for granted: It has to be earned and then protected in the face of Soviet efforts to undermine alliance solidarity. I do want to emphasize, however, that the allied leaders appreciate the rationale behind the countervailing strategy. I am confident that, in the course of our continuing consultations, their support will be sustained.

Nuclear strategy and doctrine are properly sober subjects. This should not, however, obscure the important positive contribution that the countervailing strategy makes to our most basic foreign policy objectives.

I am confident that the countervailing strategy not only strengthens deterrence but also establishes a firmer basis for our diplomacy with the Soviets. It underlines our determination to respond to any challenges to our vital interests, at the same time it confirms that we pose no threat to the legitimate interests of other states. As such, it leaves the Soviets no room for doubt about our will or our peaceful intentions.

The countervailing strategy, of course, will not transform the basically adversarial relationship we have with the Soviets. But it reduces the chances for superpower miscalculation and increases Soviet incentives to cooperate on managing and containing the competition between us. It therefore contributes to the prospects for reaching arms control agreements that limit the dangers of war.

For like reasons, the countervailing strategy reaffirms to our allies and

friends that the United States is committed—in equal measure—to protecting our mutual security interests and to international stability. I expect it will serve to solidify our relationship with them and to strengthen our role as leader of the Western alliance.

Let me conclude my opening statement by briefly addressing the question of the involvement of the State Department and the Secretary of State in the formulation of the countervailing strategy. I have carefully reviewed the record. I have concluded that Secretary Vance and the State Department were involved as the major concepts of the policy were being developed and were in a position to make their views known.

The development of the main lines of the strategy was substantially completed well before I took office, and it had already been outlined in public statements,

especially in Secretary Brown's January 1980 report to the Congress. Given my Senate responsibilities, I was of course aware of the direction of the Administration's strategic thinking. In fact, I had addressed some of the same concerns and concepts in a speech I delivered last year.

That said, the preparation and issuance of a presidential determination that codifies our nuclear strategy is itself an important action that has a significant foreign policy dimension. It therefore is clear that I, as Secretary of State, and the State Department should have been appropriately involved in the action.

I consider the situation that developed here to be an unintended exception to this Administration's record of sub-

stantially increased State Department involvement in national security issues. I have discussed this episode with the President as well as with Secretary Brown and Dr. Brzezinski [Zbigniew Brzezinski, Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs]. The President has assured me that I and others at the Department as needed will be fully consulted on the foreign policy implications of such major national security policy decisions. ■

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